Unconference Session:
How to Use Challenges & Contests

- Discuss with colleagues and partners – what sort of challenge should it be?
- Market through blogs to gaming, entertainment, health, and tech crowds + your domain people
- Challengepost.com is a platform
- Can solicit concepts as well as apps and finished products
- You can have different winners for apps and games, etc.
- You can leave the number of winners open or even if there will be a winner
- Make sure the rules are clear
- Announce the challenge around the beginning of the fiscal year for best chance at getting funded ;)
- Do a Request For Information - RFI (how Bev's group got offers for no-cost challenge platform)
- You can post your challenge-submission on a .com site if you need to – a temporary channel to run the competition
- The new .gov challenge platform that will shortly be announced will support light-weight challenges because that's where there's the most interest in gov
- Usability research challenges? Jump start Usability Guidelines online (talk to HHS to see if they're interested)
- Gov website templates solutions? Flexible; graphics + code; home page with top tasks/contact us/press-media/program/about us templates
- External star-power and celebrities are okay to use to market – just need to think through the whole message
- FDIC is running a scavenger hunt on their website to encourage a thorough reading of their resources
- Jonathan.Rubin@gsa.gov has a list of gov agencies' challenge projects
- Some types of challenges:
- Specific technical problems looking for solutions, such as lightbulb alternatives; rural youth traffic safety
- Here's our data; do something with it
- All challenges need to relate back to agency mission
- Many pay under $3K so it can be a simple credit-card procurement
- Solutions may come from other disciplines
- Can be video contests but don't have to be
- America.gov runs mini-contents for every idea campaign on the site
- Prizes don't have to be monetary – could be attention; lunch with agency administrator; annual leave; meet the President
- USA.gov created a group on YouTube for their contest – people uploaded their videos; Jess moderated; internal judging; score sheets because it was a procurement
- YouTube has a contest platform but they're very selective and didn't think USA.gov was important enough (!)
- Go to Topcoder.com – for good cheap logos
- You can do a photo competition on Flickr
- On America.gov, 900 submissions: "Partner" groups did the first cut; additional partners did the second cut; public chose the 3rd cut
- Intellectual property rights for music are a big issue for video contests
- HHS has published a Video Contest Best Practices (somewhere – Jess is going to link it to the Video page on Webcontent.gov)